

# Winterizing your Backflow Preventer

by City of Brighton Utilities Department

The cold season is approaching fast. Now is the time to start protecting your sprinkler system and backflow preventer from freezing.

The backflow device is the most important component of your irrigation system because it protects your family's tap water from harmful contaminants that are present on the lawn, things like fertilizers, pesticides and animal droppings. These contaminants can be sucked into the irrigation system when the sprinkler heads finish spraying and go back into the ground. Your backflow device acts as a stop gap between the water that is contaminated and your drinking water so it is very important that your backflow device is installed up to code and that it is functioning properly. Pressure Vacuum Breakers are the most commonly used backflow device on irrigation sprinkler systems. Vacuum Breaker are installed above ground. Because of this, understanding how to **winterize your backflow** device is very important in order to avoid costly repair bills or the possibility of cross contamination.

Winterizing your backflow device properly is easy, will save you a great deal of money and only takes one or two minutes:

1. Shut off the water to your sprinkler system at the main valve or stop-and-waste.
2. The next step will require a standard small flat head screw driver. Drain the water from the backflow preventer by opening the test cocks. (There are 2 test cocks on the side or top of your backflow preventer), to open them turn the little screws  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a turn.
3. Turn the valves on either side of the assembly  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn so they are not completely closed or open.

If properly winterized your backflow preventer should be able to sustain the cold winter months.



Winterized Pressure Vacuum Breaker